



# WATER

LEARNING RESOURCES

QAGOMA  
LEARNING

This resource has been developed in collaboration with Maxine Conroy, QAGOMA Learning Teacher Advisory Group Volunteer.

# Inquiry Question

How have artists engaged audiences to consider meaning, symbolism and metaphor in their art practice?



**Key artist 1**  
Judy Watson  
*wanami* 2019

(connections to culture, family, climate change)



**Key artist 2**  
Cai Guo-Qiang  
*Heritage* 2013

(utopian vision, delicate balance, climate change)

# Before Your Visit: Introduction and Research

1. **Reflection** activity - write down any prior knowledge you already have about
  - a) Civilisations fading away due to the disappearance of water, both ancient and modern, local and global.
  - b) Current issues about climate change, the environment and water as a precious and powerful life resource.
2. **Research** interesting information, facts and images, adding to your knowledge about each of the above.
3. **View** the art practices of Judy Watson and Cai Guo-Qiang noting how each artist has responded to stimuli.

**Judy Watson b 1959, Australian, Mundubbera** – intertwined in her artworks are strong connections to ancestry, family and identity. Influenced by Indigenous cultural traditions, place and country Watson references concealed histories, the environment, climate change and natural rhythms. Her practice makes use of research and knowledge responding to stimuli through the use of subtle layers and recurring symbols to communicate meaning.

**Cai Guo-Qiang b 1957, Chinese** – challenges traditions of art making through large scale installations. Art making practices are influenced by past theatrical training, use of non traditional materials, such as gunpowder and new technologies. Projects are influenced by location, culture and politics. Active immersion of audiences due to large scale installations.

4. **Make a comparative chart** outlining key processes, personal aesthetics and characteristics of each artists' practice.
5. **Explain** how each artist communicates meaning using symbols and/or metaphor? **Justify** by giving examples.
6. **Discuss and share** information in small groups and/or as a class. Adding to your own collection of knowledge.

**Judy Watson:** <https://artgallery.lakemac.com.au/downloads/F10C2E802C8A2BA9DFB5896E040F74A398EE01E5.pdf> | *Judy Watson - Visual Artist's Residency at Heron Island, March 2009*, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTm\\_hcqGX30](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTm_hcqGX30) | *Judy Watson introduces her woven net bronze sculpture 'tow row'*, <http://tv.qagoma.qld.gov.au/2017/02/17/judy-watson-introduces-tow-row>  
**Cai Guo-Qiang:** <https://caiguoqiang.com/> | <https://blog.qagoma.qld.gov.au/cai-guo-qiang-heritage-2013/>

# Before Your Visit: Discuss and make

**Power of water** as a vital element for life, sustenance and destruction. Brainstorm the importance of water.

**Indigenous history** of Brisbane River and GOMA site: Maiwar Green, Kurilpa Point (water rat), meeting places. 'Boodjamulla' (rainbow serpent) responsible for the life giving waters, gorges and waterways.

**Brisbane river** as a life force, connects and divides, forms boundaries and tide lines, is polluted, sometimes quiet, and at others is turbulent and floods

1. Write down what you already know about the Brisbane River and its floods.
2. How do you have this knowledge? Is it first hand experience/memory/recollection/ stories from others, from the internet, news?
3. Are any of these sources more valid than others? Why do you think this? Discuss as a class.
4. Research about the Brisbane river and the history of flooding in 1893, 1974 and 2011.

## Making response:

1. Create a series of timed, continuous line, mixed media drawings responding to an aerial view of the Brisbane River.
2. Work back into the first drawings as you respond to the Brisbane River in flood.
3. Consider oil-pastel, inks, washes, charcoal, water, dirt and mud.



Cai Guo-Qiang  
*Nine dragon wall* 1996 (APT 20th anniversary)  
Site specific gunpowder drawing



Judy Watson  
*tow row* 2016  
Every day object, fishing net, fibre arts to fabrication



Judy Watson  
*water dragon* 2011  
Reflection on Brisbane's 2011 floods

Brisbane River History and timeline - <https://www.brisbane-australia.com/brisbane-river-history.html> | Flood history - <https://www.brisbane-australia.com/brisbane-river-flood-history.html> | Indigenous sites - <https://mappingbrisbanehistory.com.au/brisbane-history-essays/brisbane-southside-history/first-australians-and-original-landscape/indigenous-sites/> | History and culture - <https://www.qhatlas.com.au/content/brisbane-river>

# During Your Visit: Objectives

Acquiring knowledge | As artist and as audience  
 How have the artists engaged you with their works?  
 What new insights have you gained? How?

## FIVE CHAPTERS: A rising tide (Disturbance) | Deep | Pulse | Cycles | Held

As you move through each part of the exhibition be open to engaging through your **five senses** (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste).

Take your time, be observant and aware in each space. How did the methods of display and contemporary approaches impact on your **authentic sensory experience**. What areas or works held your attention longer than others? What new knowledge or insights about water, climate change and sustainability are conveyed? Do personal and global challenges connect? How did they do this?

Select a further 2-4 artworks from the exhibition that you connected to, engaged with and learnt from

For each work:	1. RECORD	2. WORK	3. ENGAGED?	4. LEARNT?	5. HOW?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record artist, title, date, media, size</li> <li>Carefully examine each work –sketch and/or photograph the work and interesting details</li> <li>What kept you immersed and interested to find out more?</li> <li>What did you learn? How are symbolism and metaphor used to communicate meaning?</li> <li>How did you learn this? Engaging with visual images, art making processes, reading the didactic, digital resources?</li> <li>How does the title of an art work influence your understanding?</li> </ol>	Megan Cope RE FORMATION 2019  Hand-cast concrete oyster shells, copper slag, foam support structure  Dimensions variable		My curiosity, as I wasn't sure what it was? I wanted to know how it was made and deepen my understanding about the meaning	Installation based on an Aboriginal shell midden, evidence of Indigenous settlement and aquaculture systems. dating back 20,000 yrs. Now standing as a symbol of lost culture. Many were destroyed with colonisation and when lime was manufactured from the shells.	Looked closely at the form and structure of the parts and the whole installation. Read didactics and digital resources. Researched further info.
	Name: Title: Date: Media: Size:				

# During Your Visit Experience | Explore | Engage | Respond

**Continue collecting** knowledge, ideas and information through photographs, drawings, your responses and memories.

**As artist** – Immerse yourself in the different themed spaces. Inspired by the sensory stimulus for further research and experiments. **As audience** – How were you engaged? What did you learn? What were some of your responses? Did you have any prior knowledge? **Follow with further research and personal experimentation with media and ideas to inform a personal focus and inquiry question.**

## ANALYSE and INTERPRET key art works through context guiding questions

Judy Watson, *wanami* 2019

**What aesthetic qualities and symbols has Watson used to draw you into understanding this work?**

**Personal** – How does Watson's practice reflect the importance of water in her creative process? How does she express identity and connection to land?

**Cultural** – What symbols are used to represent water as a vital resource and climate change? How does Watson affirm traditional knowledge and culture of indigenous Australians? **How did you learn this?**

**Possible personal foci:** The natural world, connection to our environment, the importance of water as a vital element. Sustainable responses, climate change, global warming, extreme weather patterns. Floods, droughts, cycles, river, movement and tidelines. Rising sea levels, melting ice caps. Loss of pristine environments. Power of the natural elements earth, water, fire and air to sustain, connect, cleanse and destroy. Cold, wet, heat, dust and wind....

Cai Guo-Qiang, *Heritage* 2013

**How does Cai's art practice impact your experience and interpretation of *Heritage*?**

**Contemporary** – How has Cai used metaphor to express different messages? Describe your emotions experienced in response to this work?

**Cultural** - What is the symbolism of number 9 and 99 in Chinese numerology and in this work? How has Cai communicated about the preciousness of water for our planet? **Justify your interpretations.**

# After Your Visit Reflect | Analyse | Experiment



- **Think back to how you felt in each space:** Answer the following questions as starters/reminders
- What senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste) remained with you the strongest on return? Why?
- What artwork, event, memory or image stands out the most? How did it do this?
- What immediate visual response had the most significant impact on your knowledge?
- Reflect on your primary collection of photographs, drawings, notes, didactic information and personal engagement with works displayed in the exhibition.
- **What new knowledge or insights did you learn/gain about the importance of water in sustaining life, the environment and climate change?**

- **Create an inspirational mood board as a visual reference**
- Reflect on your sensory experiences and record your initial ideas– consider composition, images, words, colours, textures, shapes, focal points and possible meaning/s.

- **Write a short paragraph or poem as a reflection of your sensory experience**
- Consider your responses, reactions, memories, feelings and experience from the 'Water' exhibition

- **Experimental making responses**
- Create an experimental series or semi resolved works that experiment with media, visual language and expression
- Explores an aspect of your experience at 'Water'
- Reflects and investigates your selected focus, relates to your key artists and aligns with your inquiry question.

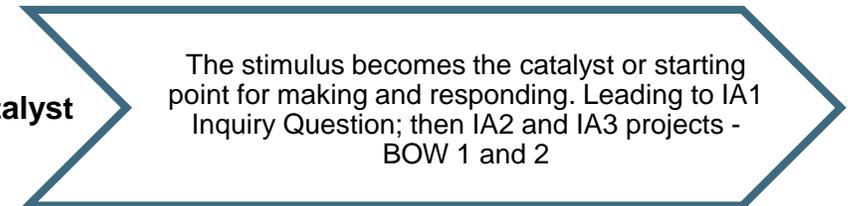


- A personal focus
- Establish an open ended inquiry question
- Connect these to reflect your experiences from the 'Water' Exhibition
- Align your personal focus with your key artists and IA1 Inquiry Question



- Explore and expand your ideas and knowledge
- Discover and document connections between your initial reactions to the stimulus at the exhibition with your personal focus, inquiry question and key artists.

Catalyst



## Captions

Unless otherwise stated, all artworks © The artist.

**Paul Blackmore** / Australia b.1968 / *Heat 1* (from 'Heat' series) 2018, printed 2019 / Archival inkjet print / Courtesy: The artist | **Judy Watson** / Waanyi people / Australia b.1959 / *wanami* 2019 / Pigment and synthetic polymer paint on canvas / Courtesy: The artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane | **Cai Guo-Qiang** / China/United States b.1957 / *Heritage* 2013 / 45 (from 99) life-sized replicas of animals: polystyrene, gauze, resin and hide / Installed dimensions variable / Commissioned 2013 with funds from the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Diversity Foundation through and with the assistance of the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art Foundation / Collection: QAGOMA / Photograph: Natasha Harth, QAGOMA

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